

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 EB-11 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01

DRC-01 SCEM-02 NEA-10 STR-08 /158 W

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R 061000Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9756

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 4728

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (REAGAN, RONALD) PFOR, BEXP

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR REAGAN'S VISIT TO SINGAPORE

REF: SINGAPORE 4335

1. SUMMARY: GOVERNOR AND MRS. REAGAN AND PARTY DEPARTED SINGAPORE AT 1810 DECEMBER 5 FOLLOWING CONCLUSION USEFUL AND SUCCESSFUL VISIT WHICH RECEIVED FAVORABLE FRONT PAGE TREATMENT IN LOCAL PRESS. GOVERNOR'S VISIT TO REGIONAL TRADE CENTER PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY FOR GOOD EXCHANGE WITH LEADING AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN ON PROBLEMS THEY FACE IN DOING BUSINESS OVERSEAS AND WAYS TO PROMOTE US EXPORTS. MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER WAS LARGELY DEVOTED TO EXPOSITION OF HIS DEEP CONCERN OVER US DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION AND ITS RELATION TO MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT. GOVERNOR RESPONDED BY GIVING VIGOROUS DEFENSE OF PRESIDENT AND EMPHASIZING HIS CONTINUING STRONG DIRECTION OF NATIONAL
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AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. IN SUBSEQUENT MEETING WITH

FINANCE MINISTER HON, GOVERNOR SAID US WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF ANY ACTION GOS MIGHT TAKE OR PERMIT WHICH WOULD SERVE TO MINIMIZE IMPACT OF THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO ON OUR MILITARY OPERATIONS AND OIL SUPPLIES TO INDO-CHINA. HON SAID GOS WOULD TRY TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE SO LONG AS IT DID NOT JEOPARDIZE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARABS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING WHIRLWIND TWO DAY VISIT TO SINGAPORE, GOVERNOR REAGAN LUNCHEONED AND HELD TWO HOUR DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER, AND MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM AND FINANCE MINISTER HON SUI SEN. GOVERNOR ALSO MIXED WITH SENIOR GOVERNMENT LEADERS AT AMBASSADOR'S DINNER, ADDRESSED BOTH LOCAL AND US BUSINESSMEN AT ROTARY CLUB, RECEIVED FULL BRIEFING US EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAM AT REGIONAL TRADE CENTER AND HELD ONE HOUR DISCUSSION THERE WITH APPROXIMATELY 70 AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN. DURING HALF HOUR PRESS CONFERENCE GOVERNOR EASILY FIELDDED RELATIVELY NON-PROBING QUESTIONS FROM BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PRESS DIRECTED LARGELY AT WATERGATE AND HIS FUTURE PERSONAL PLANS.

3. FOLLOWING LUNCHEON AT ISTANA GOVERNOR HELD APPROXIMATELY TWO HOUR DISCUSSION WITH LEE IN HIS OFFICE. PRIME MINISTER DEVOTED MOST OF TIME TO REITERATING HIS CONCERN OVER PRESENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL TURMOIL IN THE US ALONG SAME LINES HE HAD EXPRESSED TO AMBASSADOR ON NOVEMBER 10 (REFTEL.) HE SAID IT COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED AT A WORSE TIME AND APPEARED TO QUESTION WHETHER UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES US CAPABLE OF PROVIDING NECESSARY LEADERSHIP IN WORLD AFFAIRS. LEE STRESSED THAT MAJOR OIL IMPORTING COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT YIELD TO ARAB BLACKMAIL AND DEPLORED THE FACT THAT MANY COUNTRIES WERE OUT TO GET ALL THE OIL THEY COULD AND WERE UNWILLING TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN DISTRESS. (FOR FURTHER DETAILS SEE SEPTTEL.) GOVERNOR REAGAN STRONGLY DEFENDED PRESIDENT'S POSITION, MAINTAINED THAT PRESS AND OPPOSITION HAD BLOWN UP WATERGATE ALL OUT OF PROPORTION AND STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WERE STILL GIVING VIGOROUS AND EFFECTIVE DIRECTION TO CONDUCT OF DOMESTIC

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AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

4. GOVERNOR'S MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS LARGELY DEVOTED TO RAJARATNAM'S EXPOSITION OF HIS VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT IN WHICH HE THOUGHT UAR WAS MUCH MORE INTERESTED IN DEFENDING ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS AND GETTING BACK ITS TERRITORIES THAN IN PLAYING ROLE OF PAN-ARAB LEADER. CONSEQUENTLY, HE THOUGHT UN RESOLUTION

338 ESTABLISHING A CEASE-FIRE LINE ON EASTERN BANK OF SUEZ CANAL WAS FAR MORE IMPORTANT TO UAR THAN RESOLUTION 242 WHICH ENCOMPASSED ALL OF THE BOUNDARY PROBLEMS IN DISPUTE. HE COMMENTED THAT SADAT HAD OUTMANEUVERED EXTREMISTS LIKE QUADHAFI AND SHOULD BE PRAISED FOR HIS ABILITY TO GET HIS PEOPLE TO GO ALONG WITH FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS WITH ISRAELI MILITARY AND HOPEFULLY WITH THEIR DIPLOMATS AT A LATER STAGE. HE HOPED ISRAEL WOULD RECOGNIZE IMPORTANCE OF MEETING UAR NATIONAL CONCERNS BY MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS ON TERRITORIAL MATTERS. RAJARATNAM ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT HANOI HAD APPARENTLY DECIDED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WESTERN PREOCCUPATION WITH MIDDLE EAST TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM.

5. IN HIS CALL ON FINANCE MINISTER HON (WHO IS IN CHARGE OF GOS OIL POLICY), GOVERNOR NOTED HIS UNDERSTANDING OF REASONS BEHIND GOS ACTIONS ON OIL TO DATE, AND EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE SECRETARY'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT WOULD EVENTUALLY BEAR FRUIT AND SERVE TO RELIEVE OIL CRISIS. HE STRESSED THAT THE US WOULD BE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF ANY ACTION WHICH GOS MIGHT TAKE OR PERMIT WHICH WOULD SERVE TO MINIMIZE IMPACT OF ARAB OIL EMBARGO ON OUR MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SUPPLIES TO INDO-CHINA. HON OUTLINED PROBLEMS FACING SINGAPORE IN CURRENT CRISIS AND INDICATED THAT GOS WOULD TRY TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE, SO LONG AS IT DID NOT JEOPARDIZE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH ARABS.

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R 061000Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9757

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AKMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 4984
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 4728

6. GOVERNOR'S LUNCHEON ADDRESS TO ROTARY CLUB WAS DEVOTED LARGELY TO AN EXPOSITION OF HIS VIEWS ON EXCESSIVE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN BUSINESS IN US AND ON WAYS IN WHICH BUSINESS COULD BE HELPFUL IN ASSISTING MEN RESOLVING PROBLEMS OF GOVERNMENT. FOLLOWING THIS ADDRESS THE GOVERNOR MOVED TO THE RECENTLY OPENED REGIONAL TRADE CENTER WHERE HE RECEIVED A FULL BRIEFING ON OPERATIONS OF THE TRADE CENTER AND ITS PROMOTION OF US EXPORTS. GOVERNOR OBSERVED THAT THIS WAS HIS FIRST EXPOSURE TO OPERATION OF US TRADE CENTER PROGRAM. IN SUBSEQUENT LIVELY EXCHANGE WITH APPROXIMATELY 70 BUSINESSMEN IN PRESENCE OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE PRESS, THE GOVERNOR INVITED HIS AUDIENCE TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS AND OUTLINE PROBLEMS THEY FACED IN EXPANDING EXPORTS. SOME OF THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS EMERGED DURING

DISCUSSION: CONCERN OVER PROTECTIVE FEATURES OF BURKE-HARTKE BILL AND RELATED TAX LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD MAKE IT MORE EXPENSIVE FOR US COMPANIES TO OPERATE OVERSEAS, INABILITY BY SOME BUSINESSMEN TO

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BE ABLE TO FILL ORDERS FOR NEEDED SUPPLIES, CONCERN THAT JAPANESE GOVERNMENT USED INTEREST RATES IN A WAY THAT MIGHT NOT BE COMPATIBLE WITH GATT PRACTICES.

7. GOVERNOR REAGAN WAS GIVEN FRONT PAGE TREATMENT IN SINGAPORE'S POST WEEKLY CIRCULATED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER, THE STRAITS TIMES. THREE LARGE CHINESE LANGUAGE PAPERS, FOLLOWING NORMAL PRACTICE FOR LOCAL NEWS, PLAYED THEIR STORY WITH PHOTOS ON THE CITY PAGE. ALL COVERAGE WAS POSITIVE. CONTENT OF STORIES BUILT AROUND PRESS CONFERENCE; PHOTOS WERE DRAWN BOTH FROM PRESS CONFERENCE AND FROM MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND PRIME MINISTER. ALL PAPERS PICKED UP GOVERNOR'S COMMENT THAT PRESIDENCY STILL FUNCTIONING DESPITE WATERGATE. STRAITS TIMES HEADLINE, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS "NIXON IS STILL IN CONTROL SAYS REAGAN." OTHER POINTS HIGHLIGHTED WERE DESIRE FOR EVEN GREATER TRADE RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE AND REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND INCREASED US COMPETITIVENESS BECAUSE OF DEVALUATION.

8. MRS. REAGAN WAS INTERVIEWED INDEPENDENTLY IN HER
SUITE BY REPORTERS FROM THE STRAITS TIMES AND NEW
NATION.
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